

D R A F TC O N F I D E N T I A L

TAB "C"

7 February 1952

Security InformationMEMORANDUM ONPUBLIC STATEMENTS WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN AMERICAN WEAPONS

The fact of American atomic superiority undoubtedly has a deterrent effect on Soviet leaders. Whether unconsidered statements about atomic and other new weapons produce any significant deterrent effect on the Kremlin may be doubted.

While well-considered statements on atomic and other new weapons can develop confidence in the determination and strength of the U.S. and the rest of the free world, ill-considered statements on these subjects can be used by the Soviet-led Communists to encourage a belief that the U.S. might use these weapons in a reckless, irresponsible way.

Within the U.S. itself, ill-considered statements about these weapons may create a false sense of security, lead to expectation of miracles in war and possibly jeopardize the maintenance of a balanced defense program both military and civil.

It follows that we must be extremely careful in our public statements about atomic weapons. The same applies to guided missiles, and biological, radiological and chemical weapons.

Before statements and releases on atomic and other new weapons are made, these questions should be answered:

1. Will this information strengthen the morale of the free world?
2. Will this statement at this time help the American public to understand and accurately appraise the capabilities of these weapons?
3. Will this statement create the fear that the U.S. may act recklessly in the use of these weapons?

Security Information

Page 1 of 2 Pages

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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In the months ahead, as new developments in these weapons transpire, we must so present that information to the world as to buttress the confidence of the free world in America's sense of responsibility for the maintenance of the peace as well as of the fundamental values of the West.

NOTE: Statements prepared in pursuance to this memorandum shall be cleared in conformity to the President's Directive of 5 December 1950, "Public Discussion of Foreign and Military Policy." It is understood also that statements dealing with atomic weapons developments should be cleared with the Atomic Energy Commission.

Security Information

Page 2 of 2 Pages

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